INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT AT THE UNITED NATIONS

For decades, the issue of international migration and its relation with development has been debated at the United Nations. This note provides a brief overview of this debate, including the historic milestones, its current status, as well as the way towards the 2013 High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development.

A. General Assembly

Before the 2006 High-level Dialogue

Prior to 2006, the multi-dimensional aspects of international migration had been addressed in the outcome documents of numerous international conferences and summits, convened by the United Nations. Both the World Population Plan of Action, adopted at the 1974 United Nations World Population Conference, and the Recommendations for Action, agreed at the 1984 International Conference on Population, addressed relevant aspects of international migration, including its relationship with development, the protection of migrant workers, irregular migration, and forced displacement. Chapter X of the Programme of Action, adopted by the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994, is one of the most comprehensive texts on international migration adopted by the international community to date. Subsequently, most major United Nations conferences and their outcome documents, including the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995), the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), the United Nations Millennium Declaration (2000), and the World Summit Outcome (2005) have addressed relevant aspects of international migration. [1]

Since "Cairo", the issue of international migration and development has been a sub-item with biennial periodicity on the agenda of the second committee of the General Assembly. [2] For several years, the second committee considered the possibility of convening an international conference on international migration and development. This debate resulted in the decision, in December 2003, to convene a high-level dialogue on international migration and development with a non-binding outcome (chairman's summary) (A/RES/58/208).

The 2006 High-level Dialogue

The modalities of the 2006 High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, including its dates, themes, organizational arrangements, documentation, participation and outcome, were defined in successive General Assembly resolutions (A/RES/58/208, A/RES/59/241, A/RES/60/227) and elaborated in various reports and notes by the Secretary-General (A/60/205, A/60/864).

The preparatory process consisted of two panel discussions as well as one day of civil society hearings, organized by the President of the General Assembly (PGA). The two panel discussions, one in New York (8 June) and one in Geneva (4 July), featured the heads of United Nations agencies and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The informal interactive hearings with representatives of non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector were held in New York on 12 July, the results of which were summarized in a note from the PGA (A/61/187).

The 2006 High-level Dialogue, held in September 2006, moved forward the global debate on international migration in three main ways. First, Member States endorsed the proposal of the Secretary-General to create a forum to continue the global dialogue on international migration and development. The Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) was established as a voluntary, non-binding and informal consultative process, led by and open to all States Members and observers of the United Nations. Second, ahead of the Dialogue, the Secretary-General appointed Mr. Peter Sutherland as his special representative (SRSG) on international migration and development. Since 2006, the SRSG has acted as the main link

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[1] For further detail, see *Compendium of Recommendations on International Migration and Development: The United Nations Development Agenda and the Global Commission on International Migration Compared*, United Nations, 2006 (ESA/P/WP.197).

[2] The human rights of migrants have been a recurrent item on the agenda of the General Assembly's third committee.

between the state-led GFMD and the United Nations. Third, and in response to the recommendations of the Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM), the Secretary-General established the Global Migration Group (GMG) with a view to increasing system-wide coherence between the United Nations system and IOM in their response to the opportunities and challenges presented by international migration.

In December 2006, the General Assembly took note of the chairman's summary of the High-level Dialogue, the convening of the Global Forum, and the creation of the Global Migration Group (A/RES/61/208). In June 2008, the General Assembly endorsed, after a vote, a resolution on the linkages between the United Nations and the GMFD, focusing, in particular, on the role of the SRSG on International Migration and Development and that of the GMG (A/RES/62/270).

The 2013 High-level Dialogue

In resolution 63/225, adopted in December 2008, the General Assembly decided to follow up the 2006 High-level Dialogue by convening a second High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development during its 68th session in 2013. Pursuant to the same resolution, the PGA organized a one-day informal thematic debate on international migration and development on 19 May 2011. The results of the debate were summarized in a note from the PGA (A/65/944).

In December 2010, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report on the organizational details of the 2013 High-level Dialogue, including possible themes, at its 67th session (A/RES/65/170). This resolution also requested the United Nations regional commissions, in collaboration with other relevant entities of the United Nations system and IOM, to contribute to the preparatory process of the High-level Dialogue by examining the regional aspects of international migration.

In December 2012, at its 67th session, the General Assembly will provide further guidance on the modalities and organization of the 2013 High-level Dialogue. The ensuing resolution is expected to decide on the date of the 2013 High-level Dialogue, including its themes, format, organization of work, participation, documentation and outcome.

B. Commission on Population and Development

The primary role of the Commission on Population and Development (CPD), a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), is to monitor, review, assess and follow up the implementation of the Programme of Action, adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo,1994).

The CPD, at its 39th session in 2006, adopted a resolution on international migration and development, which was subsequently transmitted to the 2006 High-level Dialogue by ECOSOC (E/2006/25; E/CN.9/2006/9).

In April 2011, at its 44th session, the CPD decided that the special theme of the Commission for its 46th session in 2013 would be "New Trends in Migration: Demographic Aspects". In addition, the Commission decided that its 47th session in 2014 would be devoted to an assessment of the status of implementation of the Programme of Action of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in view of the decision of the General Assembly (A/65/234) to hold a special session on "ICPD+20" during its 69th session in 2014.

Further information

- ➢ To access reports prepared for, and resolutions adopted by, the General Assembly, see: www.unmigration.org.

- ➢ To access reports prepared for, and resolutions adopted by, the CPD, see: www.unpopulation.org.

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